

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for the communication of data between at least one host system and a storage management system, the method comprising:

defining structure for data to be transported from said at least one host system to said storage management system using a markup language; and

5 transporting said defined data from said at least one host system to said storage management system via a remote procedure call.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said markup language includes a facility to define tags, as well as structural relationships between tags.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein said markup language is extensive markup language (XML).

4. The method of claim 3, wherein said remote procedure call is an operating system independent remote procedure call.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein said remote procedure call is Java Remote Method Invocation (RMI).

6. The method of claim 5, wherein said defined data is device discovery data.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said defining is performed by at least one host agent residing on said at least one host system.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein said transporting is facilitated by said at least one host agent.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein said method further includes:

retrieving said data to be transported to said storage management system from at least one storage device embedded in or communicatively coupled to said at least one host system prior to defining the structure of said data to be transported.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein said retrieving is performed by at least one host agent residing on said at least one host system.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein said method further includes:

processing said defined data at said storage management system.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said processing includes:

parsing said defined data using a markup language.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein said parsing is performed by a standard extensive markup language (XML) parser.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein said processing includes providing said defined data to a flexible interface of said storage management system.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein said interface is operable to accept at least a portion of said defined data corresponding to a data field of said interface that exceeds a size parameter of said corresponding data field.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein said interface is operable to ignore any portion of said defined data that does not correspond to a data field of said interface.

17. The method of claim 14, wherein said interface is operable to insert at least one default value into a data field of said interface when information relating to said field is not provided in said defined data.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein said transporting occurs in response to a request from said storage management system, said request being made after said storage management system determines a change in device information has occurred since a prior transmission of data to said storage management system.

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19. A system for the monitoring and management of storage-related devices of an enterprise environment, said system comprising:

means for obtaining discovery information from at least one storage-related device of said enterprise environment;

5 means for defining structure of said obtained information using a markup language; and  
means for transporting said obtained information from said defining means for further processing.

20. The system of claim 19, wherein said markup language is extensive markup language (XML).

21. The system of claim 19, wherein said means for transporting includes Java Remote Method Invocation (RMI).

22. The system of claim 18, wherein said further processing includes a processing means flexible to differences between an interface of said defining means and an interface of said processing means.

23. A system for the monitoring and management of storage-related devices of an enterprise environment, said system comprising:

at least one host system;

at least one host agent process, wherein each of said at least one host agent process

5 resides on a respective host system of said at least one host system; and

a storage management system, wherein said storage management system is communicatively coupled to said at least one host system;

wherein at least one of said at least one host agent process is operable to define device discovery information in a markup language format and transport said formatted discovery information to said storage management system via a remote procedure call.

10 24. The system of claim 23, wherein said markup language format is an extensive markup language (XML) format.

25. The system of 23, wherein said remote procedure call is Java Remote Method Invocation (RMI).